United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ United Nations fact-finding mission to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh will travel to area tomorrow, carrying humanitarian aid.

+ UNHCR-sponsored humanitarian convoys carry urgently needed food and medicine to tens of thousands of displaced people in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

+ Frédéric Maurice, delegate of International Committee of the Red Cross, dies of injuries received yesterday in attack on Red Cross convoy in Sarajevo.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Mohammed Sahnoun, to travel to Paris and Geneva before going to Mogadishu for negotiations on coordinated approach to humanitarian assistance to that country.

+ Secretary-General welcomes release in Afghanistan of former Soviet prisoner of war.

+ Security Council welcomes announcement by United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia to start phase two of cease-fire agreement on 13 June.

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The fact-finding mission sent by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh to study ways of bringing about a peaceful settlement of the conflict there, will arrive in the region tomorrow, 20 May, a United Nations spokesman said today.

Following consultations in Rome and Geneva, the mission is now proceeding to Athens where a cargo plane has been put to its disposal by the Greek authorities. The mission, which is headed by Francesc Vendrell, Director in the Department of Political Affairs, will carry with it medicine and other humanitarian aid.

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The dispatch of the fact-finding mission was welcomed by the Security Council last week in a statement read out by Council Peter Hohenfellner (Austria), on behalf of the Council. The statement called on all concerned "to take all steps necessary" to bring an end to the violence and to facilitate the mission which is also intended to examine how the internaitonal community can provide prompt humanitarian aid to the region.

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Two humanitarian convoys sponsored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) left Zagreb today, carrying 650 metric tonnes of urgently needed food and medicine to towns in Bosnia-Herzegovina where tens of thousands of people displaced by the conflict have gathered.

According to a press release issued by UNHCR today, the 38-truck relief operation is the largest since the outbreak of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina six weeks ago. A third convoy, destined for Tuzla from Belgrade, was delayed by reports of heavily mined roads and new tension around that town. Another effort to reach Tuzla will be made tomorrow.

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Frédéric Maurice, a delegate of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), died this morning at the civilian hospital in Sarajevo of injuries received yesterday in an attack on a Red Cross convoy, according to a press release issued by the Committee today.

Mr. Maurice had been injured together with two other ICRC staff by an explosion of a Red Cross convoy carrying emergency medical supplies for the civilian hospital in Sarajevo. The ICRC said the incident happened in circumstances that remained to be clarified.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Mohammed Sahnoun, will leave New York tonight for Paris where he will have discussions with a team of the French Ministry of Health and Humanitarian Affairs, a United Nations spokeswoman said today. He would then go to Geneva for discussions with the Director-General of World Health Organization (WHO); the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Following his meetings in Europe, Mr. Sahnoun would go to Mogadishu where he would continue his discussions with the Somali leaders on the question of Security Council's resolution 751 (1992). He would also travel to the south of Somalia to work on a cease-fire agreement to end the hostilities there. Mr. Sahnoun would be back in New York at the end of the month.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali welcomed today the release in Afghanistan of a former Soviet prisoner of war, calling it "a good step in the right direction". He said he hoped it represented "the beginning of the resolution of this humanitarian problem".

The statement was issued by the Secretary-General's Spokesman François Giuliani.

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Members of the Security Council have welcomed the announcement by General Sanderson, the Force Commander of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) that phase two of the cease-fire arrangements will begin on 13 June.

In announcing its start, General Sanderson called the second phase "the most important" phase of the United Nations peace-keeping operation in Cambodia. The date signals the beginning of the regroupment and "cantonment process" in which the armed forces would place themselves under UNTAC control in cantonment areas to be disarmed and await demobilization. The process is expected to take about four weeks.

The President of the Security Council has expressed the Council's firm support to the UNTAC operation, saying that Council members considered it vital that UNTAC have the full cooperation of the parties and their full compliance with the United Nations plan.

Council President Peter Hohenfellner (Austria) made the statement in a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 14 May.
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